

Facts About Children in Foster Care ■ Lancaster County

2007 Edition (January 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006 Data)

OVERVIEW

Facts About Children in Foster Care is intended to provide annual data about children in foster care for every county in South Carolina. It covers: **Demographics** -- how many children there are in foster care, their characteristics and whether their prevalence is increasing or decreasing; **Progress Measures** -- length of time in care, number of placements, achieving permanency, and recidivism rates; and **Areas of Concern** -- legal and program shortcomings identified at monthly citizen reviews. Information is collected from local volunteer citizen review boards that review the cases of all children who have been in foster care at least four months; each case is then reviewed every six months thereafter until the child leaves care. Inquiries about this report and requests for copies of this and other counties' reports should be made to: Lisa Vosburgh, Data and Research Manager, or Denise Barker, Executive Director, South Carolina Children's Foster Care Review Board, 1205 Pendleton Street, Columbia, SC 29201. Phone: (803)734-0480; E-Mail: lvosburgh@oepp.sc.gov or on the web at <http://www.govoepp.state.sc.us/fcrb/>

The 2007 *Facts About Children in Foster Care* edition includes comparative statistics about children reported by the South Carolina Department of Social Services, who remain in foster care at least four consecutive months and were reviewed by the South Carolina Children's Foster Care Review Board at least once in 2006. It also includes demographics on those children who entered foster care late in the year and were not reviewed until 2007, but does not yet incorporate them into progress measures or areas of concern.

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

It is estimated that at the end of 2006, there were over one million (U.S. Bureau of Census) children under that age of 18 in South Carolina. Of these, 4,976 children were in out of home placements statewide for at least four consecutive months and reviewed by the Children's Foster Care Review Board January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006. Children in out of home placements represent an increasing portion of the population of all children under the age of 18 in the state, up an average of 2.4% since 2002. Children reviewed by the Review Board constituted .48% of all children in the state in 2006, up slightly from .47% in 2002. Since 2002, the number of children entering foster care has increased 26%, while the number of children leaving foster care has only increased by 2%. The number of children remaining in foster care has also increased steadily since 2002.

The tables on the following pages provide demographic data and compare the status of children in foster care statewide with county data in four major categories: Children Reviewed, Children Entering Foster Care, Children Leaving Foster Care, and Children Remaining in Foster Care.

CHILDREN REVIEWED

127 reviews were held in Lancaster County for 71 children in 2006. Data tables included in this report compare demographics of children reviewed statewide with county data. Data are based in information reported by the Department of Social Services and collected at the child's last review board meeting held in 2006.

CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE

26 children entered foster care and were reviewed by Lancaster County Review Boards in 2006. Of the children entering foster care in 2006, 58% of these children entered due to physical neglect, while 27% entered care due to abuse. The remaining children entered care due to abandonment, voluntary placement, dependency, or juvenile offenses. Forty-six percent (46%) of the 26 children who entered foster care in 2006 had previously been in foster care. The largest percentage, 50%, returned to foster care from a birth parent.

CHILDREN LEAVING FOSTER CARE

20 During 2006, 20 children who were reviewed by Lancaster County Review Boards left foster care. Permanency for a child means placement with a “forever family”. A child achieves legal permanency upon leaving the foster care system either by returning home to their natural parent or by being adopted. The largest percent of children (30%) returned home, followed by 30% who were adopted. Twenty percent (20%) of the children who left care were placed with a relative and 20% were emancipated or turned 18.

Data tables included provide comparative demographic data and departure reasons for children leaving foster care. The data represented in these tables was provided by the Department of Social Services and collected at the last review board meeting held prior to the child leaving foster care.

CHILDREN REMAINING IN FOSTER CARE

36 children in Lancaster County entered foster care prior to January 1, 2006 and remained active in the foster care system as of January 1, 2007. Data is based on information submitted by the Department of Social Services and collected at the child’s last review board meeting in 2006.

SUMMARY OF REVIEWS AND AREAS OF CONCERN

71 children in foster care were reviewed by Lancaster County Review Boards in 2006.

PARTICIPATION BY INTERESTED PARTIES AT LOCAL REVIEWS:

Interested parties are invited by the Department of Social Services and include parents, foster parents, guardian ad litem, foster children, and others who may be involved with a child’s placement in foster care. Those who attend reviews provide the local boards with important information used to make recommendations. In Lancaster County **112** individuals attended review board meetings in 2006.

AREAS OF CONCERN:

The monthly review process allows local review boards to identify systemic concerns that are barriers to permanence for children in foster care. These systemic deficiencies, or Areas of Concern, are defined as violations of law or policy. In Lancaster County, **15** Legal and **39** Program Areas of Concern were cited in 2006.

Comparative County Statistics

	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving		Children Remaining	
	n	% *	n	% *	n	% *	n	% *
	4,976	100%	1,914	100%	1,679	100%	2,884	100%
Statewide Totals								
By County								
Abbeville	24	0.48%	8	0.42%	5	0.30%	14	0.49%
Aiken	138	2.77%	81	4.23%	66	3.93%	62	2.15%
Allendale	6	0.12%	6	0.31%	1	0.06%	5	0.17%
Anderson	336	6.75%	139	7.26%	120	7.15%	185	6.41%
Bamberg	23	0.46%	5	0.26%	4	0.24%	16	0.55%
Barnwell	58	1.17%	17	0.89%	21	1.25%	33	1.14%
Beaufort	67	1.35%	33	1.72%	21	1.25%	38	1.32%
Berkeley	259	5.20%	104	5.43%	116	6.91%	144	4.99%
Calhoun	12	0.24%	3	0.16%	4	0.24%	10	0.35%
Charleston	516	10.37%	129	6.74%	115	6.85%	356	12.34%
Cherokee	76	1.53%	26	1.36%	20	1.19%	48	1.66%
Chester	44	0.88%	18	0.94%	22	1.31%	19	0.66%
Chesterfield	46	0.92%	16	0.84%	17	1.01%	21	0.73%
Clarendon	68	1.37%	45	2.35%	26	1.55%	20	0.69%
Colleton	70	1.41%	23	1.20%	36	2.14%	32	1.11%
Darlington	78	1.57%	39	2.04%	36	2.14%	31	1.07%
Dillon	67	1.35%	36	1.88%	18	1.07%	36	1.25%
Dorchester	71	1.43%	29	1.52%	30	1.79%	43	1.49%
Edgefield	20	0.40%	9	0.47%	12	0.71%	6	0.21%
Fairfield	14	0.28%	8	0.42%	5	0.30%	11	0.38%
Florence	93	1.87%	39	2.04%	26	1.55%	62	2.15%
Georgetown	41	0.82%	15	0.78%	13	0.77%	25	0.87%
Greenville	479	9.63%	172	8.99%	144	8.58%	289	10.02%
Greenwood	36	0.72%	6	0.31%	18	1.07%	18	0.62%
Hampton	11	0.22%	5	0.26%	2	0.12%	6	0.21%
Horry	242	4.86%	112	5.85%	86	5.12%	149	5.17%
Jasper	17	0.34%	12	0.63%	4	0.24%	12	0.42%
Kershaw	47	0.94%	21	1.10%	11	0.66%	27	0.94%
Lancaster	71	1.43%	26	1.36%	20	1.19%	36	1.25%
Laurens	67	1.35%	7	0.37%	16	0.95%	47	1.63%
Lee	34	0.68%	19	0.99%	19	1.13%	12	0.42%
Lexington	172	3.46%	69	3.61%	48	2.86%	116	4.02%
Marion	105	2.11%	61	3.19%	38	2.26%	51	1.77%
Marlboro	52	1.05%	33	1.72%	25	1.49%	23	0.80%
McCormick	9	0.18%	4	0.21%	1	0.06%	3	0.10%
Newberry	30	0.60%	12	0.63%	6	0.36%	23	0.80%
Oconee	145	2.91%	46	2.40%	68	4.05%	75	2.60%
Orangeburg	94	1.89%	21	1.10%	41	2.44%	54	1.87%
Pickens	101	2.03%	29	1.52%	31	1.85%	59	2.05%
Richland	402	8.08%	144	7.52%	115	6.85%	252	8.74%
Saluda	10	0.20%	6	0.31%	3	0.18%	3	0.10%
Spartanburg	335	6.73%	128	6.69%	101	6.02%	186	6.45%
Sumter	124	2.49%	45	2.35%	53	3.16%	69	2.39%
Union	14	0.28%	6	0.31%	4	0.24%	9	0.31%
Williamsburg	52	1.05%	16	0.84%	16	0.95%	34	1.18%
York	200	4.02%	86	4.49%	75	4.47%	114	3.95%

* Percent of Statewide Total

Children Reviewed

	Statewide	Lancaster
All Children	4,976	71
Case Management (percent)		
Adoption	15%	25%
County	62%	44%
Managed Treatment Services	23%	31%
Race (percent)		
Caucasian	44%	52%
African American	47%	41%
Hispanic	2%	0%
Other Minorities	7%	7%
Gender (percent)		
Male	51%	48%
Female	49%	52%
Age at Last Review (percent)		
0-5	30%	27%
6-9	16%	25%
10-15	29%	25%
16+	25%	23%
Placement Type (percent)		
Foster Care Placement	69%	69%
Therapeutic Placement	31%	31%

Children Entering Foster Care

	Statewide	Lancaster
All Children	1,914	26
Reason Entered Care (percent)		
Neglect	53%	58%
Abuse	25%	27%
Other	22%	15%
Race (percent)		
Caucasian	48%	69%
African American	42%	23%
Hispanic	4%	4%
Other Minorities	6%	4%
Gender (percent)		
Male	49%	46%
Female	51%	54%
Age at Entry (percent)		
0-5	46%	31%
6-9	18%	19%
10-15	30%	46%
16+	6%	4%
Re-Entry (percent)		
All Children	24%	46%
Home	57%	50%
Relative	30%	34%
Other	10%	8%
Adoption	3%	8%

Children Leaving Foster Care

	Statewide	Lancaster
All Children	1,679	20
Reason Left Care (percent)		
Returned Home	38%	30%
Adoption	25%	30%
Emancipation/Aged Out	15%	20%
Relative	22%	20%
Other	<1%	0%
Race (percent)		
Caucasian	47%	70%
African American	45%	20%
Hispanic	2%	0%
Other Minorities	6%	10%
Gender (percent)		
Male	49%	65%
Female	51%	35%
Age at Closure (percent)		
0-5	33%	35%
6-9	18%	30%
10-15	20%	15%
16+	29%	20%
Average Time In Care (years)	2.2	2.6
Average Number of Placements	3.2	2.5
Placement Type (percent)		
Foster Care Placement	79%	80%
Therapeutic Placement	21%	20%

Children Adopted

	Statewide	Lancaster
All Children	427	6
Adopted within 24 Months (percent)	17%	33%
Teen Adoptions (percent)	10%	0%
Race (percent)		
Caucasian	48%	34%
African American	44%	33%
Hispanic	2%	0%
Other Minorities	6%	33%
Gender (percent)		
Male	54%	100%
Female	46%	0%
Age at Adoption (percent)		
0-5	57%	67%
6-9	24%	33%
10-15	18%	0%
16+	1%	0%
Average Time In Care (years)	3.5	3.2
Average Number of Placements	2.3	1.3
Placement Type (percent)		
Foster Care Placement	79%	100%
Therapeutic Placement	21%	0%

Children Remaining in Foster Care

	Statewide	Lancaster
All Children	2,884	36
Case Management (percent)		
Adoption	2%	28%
County	71%	28%
Managed Treatment Services	27%	44%
Race (percent)		
Caucasian	42%	39%
African American	50%	53%
Hispanic	2%	5%
Other Minorities	6%	3%
Gender (percent)		
Male	52%	47%
Female	48%	53%
Age at Last Review (percent)		
0-5	24%	17%
6-9	15%	22%
10-15	33%	28%
16+	28%	33%
Placement Type (percent)		
Foster Care Placement	62%	50%
Therapeutic Placement	38%	50%
Average Time In Care (years)	4.1	3.3
Average Number of Placements (years)	3.9	3.7

Summary of Reviews

Statewide Totals	Reviews Conducted		Children Reviewed		Participation by Interested Parties	
	n	% *	n	% *	n	% *
	8,467	100%	4,976	100%	11,138	100%
By County						
Abbeville	37	0.44%	24	0.48%	45	0.40%
Aiken	205	2.42%	138	2.77%	254	2.28%
Allendale	19	0.22%	6	0.12%	11	0.10%
Anderson	569	6.72%	336	6.75%	710	6.37%
Bamberg	42	0.50%	23	0.46%	31	0.28%
Barnwell	91	1.07%	58	1.17%	112	1.01%
Beaufort	110	1.30%	67	1.35%	125	1.12%
Berkeley	437	5.16%	259	5.20%	953	8.56%
Calhoun	29	0.34%	12	0.24%	20	0.18%
Charleston	955	11.28%	516	10.37%	1,149	10.32%
Cherokee	137	1.62%	76	1.53%	205	1.84%
Chester	80	0.94%	44	0.88%	95	0.85%
Chesterfield	72	0.85%	46	0.92%	101	0.91%
Clarendon	101	1.19%	68	1.37%	147	1.32%
Colleton	113	1.33%	70	1.41%	105	0.94%
Darlington	137	1.62%	78	1.57%	133	1.19%
Dillon	111	1.31%	67	1.35%	99	0.89%
Dorchester	138	1.63%	71	1.43%	260	2.33%
Edgefield	33	0.39%	20	0.40%	13	0.12%
Fairfield	23	0.27%	14	0.28%	19	0.17%
Florence	153	1.81%	93	1.87%	172	1.54%
Georgetown	86	1.02%	41	0.82%	160	1.44%
Greenville	778	9.19%	479	9.63%	1,174	10.54%
Greenwood	60	0.71%	36	0.72%	80	0.72%
Hampton	21	0.25%	11	0.22%	3	0.03%
Horry	402	4.75%	242	4.86%	511	4.59%
Jasper	33	0.39%	17	0.34%	20	0.18%
Kershaw	106	1.25%	47	0.94%	128	1.15%
Lancaster	127	1.50%	71	1.43%	112	1.01%
Laurens	123	1.45%	67	1.35%	165	1.48%
Lee	58	0.69%	34	0.68%	33	0.30%
Lexington	308	3.64%	172	3.46%	413	3.71%
Marion	166	1.96%	105	2.11%	243	2.18%
Marlboro	69	0.81%	52	1.05%	61	0.55%
McCormick	14	0.17%	9	0.18%	10	0.09%
Newberry	58	0.69%	30	0.60%	84	0.75%
Oconee	240	2.83%	145	2.91%	441	3.96%
Orangeburg	161	1.90%	94	1.89%	215	1.93%
Pickens	209	2.47%	101	2.03%	293	2.63%
Richland	649	7.67%	402	8.08%	687	6.17%
Saluda	15	0.18%	10	0.20%	21	0.19%
Spartanburg	542	6.40%	335	6.73%	549	4.93%
Sumter	205	2.42%	124	2.49%	217	1.95%
Union	26	0.31%	14	0.28%	28	0.25%
Williamsburg	87	1.03%	52	1.05%	84	0.75%
York	332	3.92%	200	4.02%	647	5.81%

* Percent of Statewide Total

Areas of Concern Cited

	Statewide	Lancaster
Total	11,168	54
Legal		
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	1,357	3
No Timely Merits Hearing	940	7
No Court Order at Review	632	4
Other Statutory Violations	466	1
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	373	0
No Face to Face Contact	299	0
Non-Compliance with Court Order	289	0
No Timely Probably Cause Hearing	150	0
No Child Specific Recruitment	53	0
Adoption Complaint not Filed Timely	5	0
Legal Subtotal	4,564	15
Program		
No Progress Reports	1,610	11
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	856	6
Lack of Progress on Permanent Plan	811	0
No Current Case Plan/No Case Plan Within 60 Days	763	4
No Advance Packet	616	4
Interested Parties Not Invited	402	0
No Timely Referral to Adoptions	369	2
No Timely FCRB Review	333	7
No Entry on Central Registry	285	3
No Copy of Pleadings	180	0
Other Policy/Procedure Violations	122	1
No Diligent Search	96	0
No Three Week Notice to Parties	84	1
Lapse in Case Planning/Conflict with Permanent Plan	77	0
Program Subtotal	6,604	39